

will have an absolutely devastating ripple effect on our local economy that we may never recover from.

Instead of voting to end the shutdown, House Republicans have wasted time with false and misleading attempts to reopen the government bit by bit. After all, they didn't shut down the government piece by piece, so we shouldn't open it that way either.

The one bill that House Republican leadership should be bringing to the House floor today is the Senate-passed, clean funding compromise, which would go directly to the President and immediately open up the entire government for all New Mexicans and Americans.

We know that there are enough votes right now to pass a clean funding compromise. So why won't the Republican leadership allow a vote on it?

I understand that some of my Republican colleagues say part of the reason they got elected was because they pledged to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. We were all sent here to represent our constituents. I know that.

I'm here to represent constituents who are being hammered by the sequester. I've said many times in this Chamber that we need to immediately replace the sequester with a balanced approach to deficit reduction, but I'm not prepared to keep the government shut down because of it, inflicting further harm on people, not only in my district, but around the country.

In spite of the damaging effect the sequestration continues to have on my State, I am prepared to vote right now for a temporary compromise bill that funds the government at sequester levels. I am prepared to vote for it as is virtually every Democrat in the House. The Senate has already passed it. The President says he'll sign it immediately.

We want to get rid of the sequester, but we're willing to vote for a compromised funding bill at sequester levels, and I'll tell you why—because, at this time, it's a reasonable path forward.

So to my Republican friends who don't like the Affordable Care Act, here's a proposal for you: let's reopen the government now with a clean funding bill. Let's put all the furloughed Federal employees back to work. Then we can work together to determine what parts of the Affordable Care Act work well and which parts need to be addressed. After a reasonable amount of time, we can make the necessary adjustments to the law.

That's how you effectively represent your constituents who still have serious concerns about the Affordable Care Act. That's a reasonable path forward.

Mr. Speaker, let's reopen government right now. Then let's work together on a long-term solution that addresses the serious and significant fiscal issues facing our Nation today.

TIME TO SHOW LEADERSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, Irish leader Henry Boyle once said:

The most important trip you can make in life is meeting people halfway.

Unfortunately, in this debate, the President and HARRY REID's latest offers are way short of halfway. They won't even come to the negotiating table.

During this shutdown, the Republicans in the House have passed nine bills to fund and reopen vital functions of government. Let me go through some of them for you:

Twenty-five of my Democratic colleagues voted with House Republicans to fund pediatric cancer research. Twenty-three of my Democrats colleagues voted with Republicans to reopen national parks, memorials, and monuments;

□ 1115

Thirty-five of my Democratic colleagues voted with Republicans, honoring our promise to give veterans the benefits they have earned;

Thirty-six of my Democratic colleagues voted with Republicans to pay our National Guard and Army Reserve personnel;

Twenty-three of my Democratic colleagues voted with Republicans to make sure funds are available to provide disaster relief; and

One hundred eighty-nine of my Democratic colleagues voted with House Republicans to provide backpay for furloughed Federal employees.

Each of these are reasonable proposals, yet HARRY REID insists that virtually all of them will not be considered in the Senate, and the President has threatened a veto.

Let me repeat. House Republicans have passed bills to fund pediatric cancer research, reopen national parks, provide benefits to veterans, pay salaries for our National Guard, fund disaster relief programs and other vital services. Dozens of my Democratic colleagues have voted for each of these bills, yet the President and HARRY REID won't budge.

The American people are disappointed in this shutdown—after all, this is not the way government is supposed to work—but the American people are also figuring this out. This shutdown can end if HARRY REID and President Obama meet House Republicans at the negotiating table—but their chairs sit empty.

The American people don't want the President's health care law, but they are ready for this shutdown to end. It's time for both parties to listen to the American people, work out our differences, and find a commonsense way forward.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, this past Friday, while referencing how long the government shutdown lasts, a senior Obama administration official told *The Wall Street Journal*:

It really doesn't matter how long the government shutdown lasts because we are winning.

But, Mr. Speaker, as you know and I know, this government shutdown isn't a game. There are no winners when Washington fails the most basic test of governing. That is why this body passed four bipartisan proposals to keep the government open while shielding Americans from the disastrous effects of President Obama's health care law.

Once a shutdown was triggered by Senate Democrats, we worked to minimize its harmful effects with the passage of bills to reopen our national parks and museums, to restore critical funding for children's cancer research, fund the Veterans Administration, and to continue providing nutritional assistance through the Women, Infants, and Children program, among other measures. Now we're waiting on President Obama and the Senate Democrats to do their part.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents can't wait too much longer. Across my district, Tennesseans are feeling the very real impact of President Obama and the Senate Democrats' continued refusal to negotiate.

Larry, in Jamestown, is a park concessionaire at Big South Fork Recreation Area. Fall is his busiest season. He estimates that he lost \$7,500 on an engagement he had planned for 11 months—canceled because of the government shutdown.

Following the Veterans Administration's warning that they could run out of funding as early as late October, Charles in Crossville emailed my office pleading for help: "I am a disabled veteran who depends on my compensation check to have some quality of life," he wrote. "This is unacceptable."

Bobby, in Fentress County, is a craftsman, who was supposed to have his work displayed in the Smithsonian American Art Gallery last Thursday—a proud moment stolen from him because of an unnecessary gridlock here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, our Senate colleagues have the power to end this arbitrary and unnecessary pain today by taking up the House-passed measures to reopen our parks and museums, to restore veterans' benefits and fund other important functions of government. What we need now is for them to act.

Our constituents expect us to listen to them, to work out our differences, and to find a commonsense way forward. Why can't we at least give them that? HARRY REID and President Obama need to listen to the people of this country and come to the table and negotiate. Let's get our work done.